

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Saint Francis de Sales uses an image that captures our reality as people recovering from lust:

"So long as fruits are undamaged they may be preserved, some in straw, some in sand, and some in their own leaves; but when they are once bruised, it is almost impossible to keep them but with honey and sugar in conserves: in like manner purity which has never been wounded or violated can be kept in many ways, but when it has once been impaired, nothing can conserve it but an excellent devotion, which, as I have often said, is the true spiritual honey and sugar" (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part III, Chapter 12).

Lust wounded our capacity for intimacy, honesty, and peace. No matter how many times we resolved to stop, our willpower was not enough. Like bruised fruit, we required something greater—the sweetness of God’s mercy, daily devotion, and the fellowship of recovery.

Recovery literature describes this condition clearly: “At a certain point... the most powerful desire to stop... is of absolutely no avail” (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 24). Our hope lies not in ourselves but in God.

This Sunday’s first reading gives us a picture of that surrender (2 Kings 5:14–15):

Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of Elisha, the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean of his leprosy. Naaman returned with his whole retinue to the man of God. On his arrival he stood before Elisha and said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel. Please accept a gift from your servant.”

Naaman resisted at first, but when he humbled himself, he was cleansed. In recovery, Step 1 acknowledges that we too are “bruised fruit,” powerless over lust. Only when we plunge into God’s mercy are we renewed.

Some of us surrendered quickly after a few failed attempts. Others were mangled by years of secrecy and despair before finally admitting the truth. Either way, healing comes only through God's grace.

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one returns in gratitude (Luke 17:11-19).

One of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan.

Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not?"

Where are the other nine?

Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?"

Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

Sobriety may come through God's grace, but long-term freedom requires gratitude and devotion. Lust loses its power when we continually return to God with thanksgiving, live honestly in fellowship, and share what we have freely received. Gratitude keeps us spiritually alive and preserves the healing God has given.

Reflection Questions

- How does Saint Francis de Sales' metaphor of "bruised fruit" describe your experience with lust addiction?
- What does Naaman's cleansing teach you about humility and surrender?
- How does gratitude protect you from slipping back into old patterns?

CIR Retreats Happening this Fall

Strengthen your recovery and deepen your faith with fellow community members at a CIR retreat

- Weekend retreat in Menlo Park, CA October 17-19
- 1-day retreat in Jensen Beach, FL on November 8
- Find inspiration, guidance, and encouragement through testimonies, workshops, CIR meetings, sacraments, reflection time, and recovery fellowship
- Find more information and register today at catholicinrecovery.com/events

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: 2 Kings 5:14-17

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Gospel: Luke 17:11-19